DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 106 464 CE 003 625

AUTHOR Carlson, Norman A.
TITLE Corrections--Past and Present.
PUB DATE 13 Feb 75
NOTE 14p.; Speech presented to the Northern Virginia Association of Life Underwriters (February 13, 1975, Springfield, Virginia)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS Changing Attitudes; Correctional Education; *Correctional Rehabilitation; *Corrective Institutions; *Criminals; Design Needs; Futures (of Society); *Needs; Rehabilitation; Rehabilitation Programs; *Speeches
IDENTIFIERS National Institute of Corrections

ABSTRACT

Today we honor Charlie Lankford, a former prison inmate, who has turned his back on crime and is now involved in rehabilitation efforts in Fairfax County. Sadly, Charlie is the exception; our efforts toward rehabilitation have generally failed. In recent years, emphasis on rehabilitation and diagnosis has taken precedence over protecting society, creating an unbalanced system of corrections. We cannot diagnose crime as if it were a physical or mental disease; we cannot prescribe a precise treatment or guarantee a cure. To develop a more rational system of correction we must improve our local jails, and decide which types of offenders we want to incarcerate. I would certainly include the violent offender, the repeat offender, and the white-collar criminal, and keep out of jail the younger first offenders, the alcoholics, and those found guilty of non-support of their families. These people belong in community-based programs. In reforming our prisons, we should build smaller, more manageable institutions, and locate them near large urban centers where adequate educational, medical, and staffing needs can be provided. The establishment of the National Insitute of Corrections is a recent step toward providing a mechanism by which Congress can provide funds to help improve corrections at the regional, State and local levels. (Author/HW)

CE

Department of Justice

FEB 26 1975

ED106464

CORRECTIONS -- PAST AND PRESENT

SPEECH BY

NORMAN A. CARLSON
DIRECTOR, FEDERAL BUREAU OF PRISONS

BEFORE THE

NORTHERN VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION

OF

LIFE UNDERWRITERS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

12 Noon

FEBRUARY 13, 1975

Valle's Steak House
Springfield, Virginia

CE003625

First of all, I am very happy I was invited to be here to see my colleague and friend, Charlie Lankford, receive the honor you have bestowed on him today.

I've known for a long time that Charlie Lankford was an outstanding person who has done so much to help his fellow man.

I'm certain there are very few bank robbers with 20 years in Sing Sing, Atlanta, and Leavenworth who would be sitting down to lunch today or any day with a group of business leaders and public officials.

All joking aside, I want you to know I fully share the feelings that prompted the Northern Virginia Association of Life Underwriters to give Mr. Lankford this award. I think we can all take inspiration from the story of a man like Charlie, who turned his back on a life of crime and started the Offender Aid and Restoration Program of Fairfax County so that he could help others break their patterns of criminal behavior and become law-abiding citizens once again.

Everyone in the criminal justice system in this country -- prison officials, judges, probation officers, and police officers as well as the general public -- wishes there were more success stories like Charlie Lankford's.

Perhaps there would be -- and perhaps Charlie himself might have served only one sentence instead of three or four -- if we knew more about how to change offenders. But the unfortunate truth of the matter is that we don't know very

much about rehabilitation or about the causes and cures for crime. For a long time, we said we did -- or we kidded ourselves that we did -- but I think a new sense of reality is now sweeping over the entire criminal justice system of this country.

What has caused this new sense of reality is the news that crime, particularly violent crime, is on the increase again in this country. The latest FBI statistics show that serious crime rose 16 percent during the first nine months of 1974. Despite higher Federal investments in fighting crime in recent years, despite additional law enforcement personnel, people are less safe today than ever in their homes and on the streets against those people operating outside the law.

The main problem is the repeat offender, the person with a career of crime. Studies done by the FBI, by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, and by private agencies all point to the fact that the recidivist who continues a life of crime is the Number One cause of crime in this country.

These are people who have served time in prison before and have gone through the programs offered and yet they have gone right back out in the street and committed more crimes against their fellow citizens. Despite all the programs, these people have obviously not been rehabilitated.

Charlie Lankford, as a former prison inmate, and I, as a former prison correctional officer, may disagree on some things, but one thing he and I -- and just about everyone else with

inside knowledge of corrections -- can agree on is that prison is an extremely difficult place to change people's patterns of behavior.

Rehabilitation is a fairly new concept in society's attempts to control crime. In ancient times, crime was punished by banishment, death, slavery, or mutilation. Sometimes people were placed under house arrest or thrown into a dungeon while they awaited execution. Caesar, I believe, kept one Gallic leader in chains for seven years before parading him through Rome in one of his triumphs and afterwards having him strangled. There were no facilities for incarcerating criminal offenders as we have today.

Jails came into use in England some time after the barons won their rights from King John under the Magna Carta early in the 13th century. These jails were filthy holes, as you can imagine, and when they were filled, the overflow of offenders were herded into idle ships at anchor in English ports. The unsanitary conditions in these ships and jails led to a really horrifying rate of disease and death for inmates and jailers alike; so a better solution, devised around the year 1600, was to banish people convicted of crime to the colonies in America and Australia. Altogether, the British got rid of about a million and a quarter offenders before the flow was stopped in 1890.

All through these centuries, society's response to crime

was, first and foremost, punishment, and secondly, deterrence. Little thought was given to rehabilitation and there were certainly few, if any, Charlie Lankfords around to help the man whose life was crippled and whose health was broken by physical punishment or by long periods of inhumane incarceration.

The penitentiary system started in the United States early in the 19th century in Pennsylvania under the influence of the Quakers. Penitentiary derives from the word "penitent" and prisoners were required to serve out their sentences in solitude and silence with the Bible at hand. In addition to meditating on the scriptures and on his sins, the prisoner constructed industrial products, until his sanity or his physical health, or his sentence ran out.

The philosophy behind this system apparently was that the inmate would regret the errors that had led him to this sorry state and he would go and sin no more. So the concept of rehabilitation was added to the concepts of punishment and deterrence in the treatment of criminal offenders. In our own lifetimes, rehabilitation has become in some people's minds the predominant reason for incarcerating offenders, or at least it has been the predominant <u>stated</u> reason.

It has become pretty obvious in recent years that the entire system of corrections has become unbalanced. Our job in corrections is to protect society and the idea has taken

hold that we can best carry out this mission by somehow rehabilitating offenders through a system of organized activities that will cure them of crime and turn them into law-abiding citizens.

It would be a good trick if we could do it, but unfortunately too often we can't. Until the psychiatrists, the psychologists, the social scientists, and the other behavioral disciplines can give us more clues as to what motivates the criminal, we are going to have to live with the fact that we cannot change offenders. All we can do is offer them the encouragement to change themselves.

The erroneous idea that prisons can somehow come up with a panacea for reforming criminals can be traced in large measure to the language that has been used in the corrections systems of this country over the past 20 or 30 years. We have talked in terms of diagnosis, of observation, of therapy, and of treatment. These are all medical or mental health terms and they imply that we have created a "medical model" for dealing with criminal offenders.

But we cannot diagnose crime as if it were a physical or mental disease, we cannot prescribe a precise treatment and we certainly cannot guarantee a cure. We are taking steps in the Federal Prison System to stop the use of misleading terms like diagnosis and treatment and to replace them with terms that more accurately describe what is really going on in the prisons today.

If we are going to have a more rational system of corrections in this country, there are several very important things that must be done.

First we have to improve our local jails. Far too many of them are simply human warehouses where hardened criminals are thrown together with youthful first offenders, for whom incarceration is a really terrifying experience.

Secondly, we have to decide which types of offenders we want to incarcerate. I would certainly include at least three types -- the violent offender who is a danger to society because of his assaultive behavior; the repeat offender or career criminal who will not or cannot respond to community supervision; and the white-collar criminal. I have particularly in mind the white-collar offender who cheats on his income tax. Out of some 80 million people and millions of businesses who pay Federal taxes each year, only about 1,000 are found guilty of tax evasion. Obviously this low rate of non-compliance is at least partially the result of the deterrent effect of incarceration for those who are convicted.

At the same time, there are many offenders who should be kept out of jail or prison. The most obvious examples are the younger first offenders, the alcoholics, and those found guilty of not making support payments to their families. These people belong in community-based programs such as probation, halfway houses, or diversion. It doesn't make much

sense to jail a man for non-support and thus make it impossible for him to earn the money he rightfully owes to his family. The alcoholic belongs in a hospital or in a rehabilitative program like Alcoholics Anonymous - not in jail. Throwing a younger first offender into prison runs the risk of turning him into a hardened criminal when he might be diverted from further criminal activity by proper supervision in the community.

The third thing we have to do is improve the institutions themselves. Charlie Lankford has served sentences in a couple of our large prisons, Leavenworth and Atlanta, and he can testify to the fact that they are certainly not country clubs. The crowded conditions in these old institutions make secure conditions and meaningful programs extremely difficult, if not impossible. Three of the largest Federal prisons housing 25 percent of all Federal offenders were built more than 70 years ago and one of them, McNeil Island in the state of Washington, is 110 years old.

The solution offered by some individuals and organizations to this problem is simply to tear the prisons down. They view the concept of community-based corrections as the long-awaited panacea -- the cure for all correctional problems.

Certainly many offenders can benefit from community based corrections, and this fact has long been recognized in the criminal justice system of this country. Consequently about half the offenders convicted in Federal courts today are

placed on probation by the presiding Federal judges.

Whether we like to admit it or not, however, there is a hard core of offenders in this country who are dangerous to the lives and property of other people. They will not respond to correctional programs and they remain a threat to the safety of others. They must be locked up to protect society. Because of the danger that these offenders represent to the community, it is naive to suppose that institutions are a thing of the past.

But as long as jails and prisons are needed, they ought to be the type of facilities that offer hope to inmates rather than bastille-like places where people are simply warehoused for the period of time the court has imposed sentence. One of the most pressing problems in our antiquated institutions today is the lack of privacy, with six and eight men to a cell.

Charlie Lankford can tell you what a corrosive effect such conditions have on inmates and how these crowded cells of iron and concrete are incompatible with human dignity.

Eventually we want to close our larger, older institutions like Leavenworth and McNeil Island and build smaller, more manageable prisons. Ideally these new institutions would contain no more than 500 inmates and would afford them privacy. We are not out to build country clubs or to coddle inmates, but by scaling these institutions down to a more manageable size, we hope to improve control and to provide more security for

correctional staff and inmates alike by reducing assaults and homosexual activity.

We want to get away from the practice of locating institutions in remote rural settings. A modern prison should be built near a large urban center where adequate education, medical, and other community facilities are available to meet the needs of staff and inmates alike. It is difficult to recruit competent young professionals for rural institutions far removed from major metropolitan areas.

Far too many prison inmates are poor, have little education, and are not trained to hold jobs. We are trying to meet these obvious needs by a widespread program of education and training down to the basic literacy level, and as a matter of fact, last year more than 3300 Federal inmates earned their high school degrees. Inmates also receive job training in a variety of skills and they are entitled to group and individual counseling and medical and dental care.

Not many years ago, a man might serve five to ten years in an institution and then was simply set free by the side of the road with a suit of clothes, a bus ticket, and a few dollars in his pocket. That wasn't much of a rehabilitation program and I'm not sure I could have made a successful adjustment to society under similar conditions. Today we try to ease a released inmate back into society gradually, after exposing him to a wide variety of training and other programs.

I want to emphasize, however -- and I am sure Charlie Lankford will bear me out -- that while we think this is a more humane approach than we have used in the past, it is not a panacea. There are no ample solutions. We have found no sure-fire way to cure criminals and make them want to live within the law. But we do make programs of education and training and counseling available - and we do use halfway houses and furlough programs - so that when the incarcerated inmate makes the decision to change, he will have the tools available to rehabilitate himself.

One recent development I should mention was passage last summer of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act which I think in the long run is going to have tremendous impact around the country in terms of trying to improve the juvenile component of the criminal justice system.

One part of the new act establishes the National Institute of Corrections which will have three basic missions:

-- The first will be to try to help state and local governments in their staff training and development programs.

-- The second will be to provide funds and a vehicle for research into the causes of crime as well as what can be done in terms of the correction of the offender.

-- The third goal is to serve as a clearinghouse for information as to what is going on around the country in terms of improvement in criminal justice, particularly in that phase we call corrections.

Basically, the National Institute of Corrections will not be some kind of academy but rather it will be a mechanism by which the Congress can provide funds to help improve corrections at the regional, state and local levels.

One of the first things I did when the Act was passed was suggest to the Attorney General - and he agreed - that Charlie Lankford be made a member of the Advisory Board which will be the governing body of the National Institute of Corrections. I suggested Charlie for a number of reasons but mainly because I thought there would be enough so called experts on the panel and what we needed was at least one expert with a lot of practicing experience -- on both sides of the law. I am a member of the Board, so Charlie and I will be working closely together in this new effort to improve the corrections aspect of the criminal justice system.

I think the story of Charlie Lankford is inspiring and I want to add my bit to the recognition being conferred on him today. Many men who have served time in prisons and have led a life of crime have made the decision to become law-abiding citizens, just as Charlie did. But very few have had the ability and dedication to go out and organize a project like OAR to help men in jail to rebuild their lives.

I hope you will continue to give him your encouragement and support because without the help of public-spirited citizens who can offer former offenders jobs and a useful place

in the community, there is little hope that any attempts at rehabilitation will ever be successful.

* * * * * *

DOJ-1975-02